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## Division of Waterway Improvement Program

### Boating Infrastructure Grant (B.I.G.)



*“What you need to know to apply”*

# Maryland's Boating Infrastructure Grant (BIG) Program

## I. Introduction

Recreational boats **26 feet or more in length**, called “**nontrailerable**” boats, represent about 4 percent, or more than 600,000, of the recreational boats in the United States. Although we have approximately 12,000 marinas in the United States, Congress recognized that insufficient tie-up facilities exist for transient, nontrailerable boats for reasonable and convenient access from our navigable waters. These boaters are unable to enjoy many recreational, cultural, historic, scenic, and natural resources of the United States. We also have an insufficient quantity of marinas or commercial tie-up facilities along extended stretches of our coastlines and rivers that benefit transient, nontrailerable boats.

The BIG Program began funding projects in 2001 and is a two tiered program, paid for by money from the Sportfish Restoration Funds and administered by the United States Fish and Wildlife Service. This Program is funded by a small percentage of the Federal Gasoline Tax – an amount which represents fuel purchased by boaters across the nation. The Sportfish Restoration Fund has financed many programs which have helped people who enjoy our aquatic resources over the years. They include thousands of publicly owned launch ramps, as well as the Clean Vessel Act Pumpout Program which pays for pumpout stations and facilities throughout our coastal and inland waters, resulting improved water quality.

BIG funds are used to create infrastructure for non-trailerable boats, which cannot use launching ramps, so they may travel from port to port in costal waters and find mooring and docking facilities wherever they go.

Congress passed the Sport Fishing and Boating Safety Act of 1998 (16 U.S.C. 777g). Under the Act, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service conducts the **Boating Infrastructure Grant (BIG) Program**. The BIG Program will provide funding nationally to States and Territories to construct, renovate, or maintain transient tie-up facilities for recreational boats 26 feet or more in length. Project funding occurs in two stages. The first stage, Tier One, is limited to \$100,000 per year per state, and is designed for small projects. The second stage, Tier Two, on the other hand, can be much larger in scope than those in Tier One. And unlike the latter, Tier Two proposals **are judged on a nationally competitive basis.**

This program provides funding to:

- Create dockage for transient recreational boats 26 feet or more in length for recreational opportunities and safe harbors;
- Provide navigational aids for boaters to use these facilities;
- Enhance access to recreational, historic, cultural, natural, and scenic resources;
- Strengthen local ties to the boating community and its economic benefits;
- Promote public/private partnerships and entrepreneurial opportunities;
- Provide continuity of public access to the shore; and
- Promote awareness of transient boating opportunities.

The following information is mandatory and must be included in the letter or e-mail of interest:

1. Contact information, project location, and other pertinent details.
2. A brief project description, including scope of the project with specific concern toward the needs of recreational boats 26 feet or more in length, and the transient nature of the project.
3. A realistic approximate cost estimate associated with the concept.
4. A list of potential sponsor(s) for the local match of at least 25%, equal to cost of the Federal funds received whether the applicant plans to apply for Tier 1 or Tier 2 funding.
5. Letters of intent should be in Microsoft Word format accompanied by the BIG application, located at: [www.dnr.state.md.us/grantsandloans/wwifederalgrants.html](http://www.dnr.state.md.us/grantsandloans/wwifederalgrants.html)

**Letters or e-mails of interest should be sent to:**

Department of Natural Resources  
Waterway Improvement Program Division  
Tawes State Office Building, E-4  
580 Taylor Ave.  
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

Attn: Michael Ewing

Tel: (410) 260-8440  
Fax: (410) 260-8404  
E-mail: [mewing@dnr.state.md.us](mailto:mewing@dnr.state.md.us)

## II. Program Definitions

The following list outlines the definitions used in 50 CFR Part 86, page 5287 of the Boating Infrastructure Grant Program; Final Rule of the Federal Register. Some of these definitions will be important while looking through the Grant Agreement Package. For more detail, please use this web-site link for clarity <http://federalaid.fws.gov/BIG/bigfinalrule.pdf> For these purposes, the following terms are defined as:

**Construct** means engaging in activities that produce new capital improvements and increase the value or usefulness of existing property. These activities include building new tie-up facilities or replacing or expanding existing tie-up facilities.

**Grant** means financial assistance the Federal Government awards to an eligible applicant.

**Grant agreement** means a contractual agreement used to obligate Federal Aid funds for carrying out work covered by an approved grant proposal.

**Maintain** means engaging in activities that allow the facility to continue to function, such as repairing docks. These activities exclude janitorial activities.

**Navigable waters** means waters connected to or part of the jurisdictional waters of the United States that transient nontrailerable recreational vessels currently use or can use.

**Nontrailerable recreational vessels** mean motorized boats 26 feet or more in length manufactured for and operated primarily for pleasure, including vessels leased, rented, or chartered to another person for his or her pleasure.

**Project** means a specific plan or design.

**Proposal** means a description of one or more projects for which a State requests grant funds.

**Recreational waters** mean navigable waters that vessels use for recreational purposes.

**Renovate** means to rehabilitate or repair a tie-up facility to restore it to its original intended purpose, or to expand its purpose to allow transient nontrailerable recreational vessels.

**Tie-up facilities** mean facilities that transient nontrailerable recreational vessels occupy temporarily, not to exceed 10 consecutive days: for example, temporary shelter from a storm; a way station en route to a destination; a mooring feature for fishing; or a dock to visit a recreational, historic, cultural, natural, or scenic site.

**Transient** means passing through or by a place, staying 10 days or less.

**Water-body** means the lake, section of river, or specific area of the coast, such as a harbor or cove, where tie-up facilities or boat access sites are located.

The following list outlines the term associated with “***Boating Infrastructure***”. It is important to remember, the BIG program only funds projects for nontrailerable recreational vessels. If infrastructure needs will be used by other boaters as well, **funding will be prorated to match only use by transient boaters.**

***Boating Infrastructure*** refers to features that provide stopover places for transient nontrailerable recreational vessels to tie up. These features include, but are not limited to:

- A. Mooring buoys (permanently anchored floats designed to tie up nontrailerable recreational vessels):
- B. Day-docks (tie-up facilities that do not allow overnight use):
- C. Navigational aids (e.g., channel markers, buoys, and directional information):
- D. Transient slips (slips that boaters with nontrailerable recreational vessels occupy for no more than 10 consecutive days):
- E. Safe harbors (facilities protected from waves, wind, tides, ice, currents, etc., which provide a temporary safe anchorage point or harbor of refuge during storms):
- F. Floating docks and fixed piers:
- G. Floating and fixed breakwaters:
- H. Dinghy docks (floating or fixed platforms that boaters with nontrailerable recreational vessels use for a temporary tie-up of their small boats to reach the shore):
- I. Restrooms:
- J. Retaining walls:
- K. Bulkheads:
- L. Dockside utilities:
- M. Pumpout stations:
- N. Recycling and trash receptacles:
- O. Dockside electric service:
- P. Dockside water supplies:
- Q. Dockside pay telephones:
- R. Debris deflection booms: and
- S. Marine fueling stations.

### III. Eligible/Ineligible Project Listing

The following list outlines projects eligible and ineligible for BIG funding. This criterion is defined in CFR 50 part 86 page 5288. It is very important to review this listing to determine whether your planned project fits the program guidelines.

#### **A. Eligible Projects** Your project is eligible for funding if you propose to:

1. Construct, renovate, and maintain either publicly or privately owned boating infrastructure tie-up facilities. To be eligible, you must:
  - a. Build these tie-up facilities on navigable waters, available to the public. You must design new construction and renovations to last at least 20 years;
  - b. Design these tie-up facilities for temporary use for transient nontrailerable recreational vessels;
  - c. Build these tie-up facilities in water deep enough for nontrailerable recreational vessels to navigate (a minimum of 6 feet or depth at the lowest tide or other measure of lowest fluctuation);
  - d. Provide security, safety, and service for these boats; and
  - e. Install a pumpout station, if you construct a facility for overnight stays;
    - i. If there is already a pumpout within a reasonable distance (generally within 2 miles) of the facility, you may not need one;
    - ii. For facilities intended as day stops, we encourage you to install a pumpout; and,
    - iii. You may use funds from the Clean Vessel Act pumpout grant program to pay for a pumpout station.
2. Do one-time dredging only, to give transient vessels safe channel depths between the tie-up facility and maintained channels or open water.
3. Install navigational aids, limited to giving transient vessels safe passage between the tie-up facility and maintained channels or open water.
4. Apply funds to grant administration.
5. Fund preliminary costs:
  - a. Preliminary costs may include any of the following activities completed before signing a grant agreement:
    - i. Conducting appraisals
    - ii. Administering environmental reviews and permitting:

- iii. Conducting technical feasibility studies, for example, studies about environmental, economic, and construction engineering concerns:
    - iv. Carrying out site surveys and engaging in site planning:
    - v. Preparing cost estimates: and
    - vi. Preparing working drawings, construction plans, and specifications.
  - b. We will fund preliminary costs only if we approve the project:
  - c. If the project is approved, the appropriate Service Regional Director must still approve the preliminary costs.
6. Produce information and education materials such as charts, cruising guides, and brochures.
- a. Conducting technical feasibility studies, for example, studies about environmental, economic, and construction engineering concerns:
  - b. Carrying out site surveys and engaging in site planning:
  - c. Preparing cost estimates: and
  - d. Preparing working drawings, construction plans, and specifications.
  - e. We will fund preliminary costs only if we approve the project:
  - f. If the project is approved, the appropriate Service Regional Director must still approve the preliminary costs.
  - g. Produce information and education materials such as charts, cruising guides, and brochures.

## **B. Ineligible Projects**

Reminder: The focus of the BIG program is for transient recreational vessels. The USFWS does not consider educational or research vessels to be applicable to the BIG program.

Additionally, your project is ineligible for funding if you propose to:

- 1. Complete a project that does not provide public benefits, for instance, a project that is not open to the public for use:
- 2. Involve law enforcement activities:
- 3. Significantly degrade or destroy valuable natural resources or alter the cultural or historic nature of the area:
- 4. Construct or renovate principal structures **not expected** to last at least 20 years:
- 5. Do maintenance dredging (dredging subsequent to construction):
- 6. Fund operations or routine, custodial, and janitorial maintenance of the facility:

7. Construct, renovate, or maintain boating infrastructure tie-up facilities for nontrailerable vessels, for example the following:
8. Tie-up slips available for occupancy for more than 10 consecutive days by a single party:
9. Dryland storage:
10. Haul-out features: and
11. Boating features for trailerable or “car-top” boats (boats less than 26 feet in length), such as launch ramps and carry-down walkways
12. Develop a State program plan to construct, renovate, and maintain boating infrastructure tie-up facilities.

## **IV. The Maryland BIG Application Process**

### **A. Guidelines to Writing Project Grants**

The following guidelines are intended as an aid in writing and reviewing project statements for Wildlife Restoration and Sport Fish Restoration grant proposals associated with the BIG program. We hope to make this process as easy and simple as possible.

Our goal is to support municipal, county and private interest in preparing project statements that meets State needs, that meet Fish and Wildlife Service needs, and that unquestionably meet legal requirements.

The guidelines and checklist are not intended to be a substitute for the Federal Aid Handbook. Applicable chapters of the handbook should be carefully read and studied prior to writing a project statement. To read more about BIG Federal Regulations or additional information, click on the following link to the Federal Aid web-site: <http://federalaid.fws.gov/BIG/bigfinalrule.pdf>

To acquire a program application for Maryland’s BIG program, click on the following link: [Application for BIG Grant Funding](#).

### **B. Need**

Why is the project being undertaken? Provide a clear word picture of the need to be met, the problem to be solved, or the opportunity to be exploited. A sound and rational justification for undertaking the project is needed. This section is of foremost importance because it provides the basis for the remainder of the project description.

1. Does this section clearly describe the needs, problems, or opportunities that would be partially or totally met, solved, or exploited by implementation of the proposed project?
2. Does this section contain necessary background information, historical perspectives, and other supporting information so the reader can understand the importance and current status of the needs, problems, or opportunities?



3. Does this section use specific information to show the specific needs, problems or opportunities that will be addressed rather than rely on broad all inclusive generic statements? Is the section customized to describe the unique situation in your State?
4. Does this section present a sound and rational justification for funding implementation of the proposed project? Would the need for funding and implementation be evident to the reader?
5. When possible, does this section cite appropriate references such as DNR code, Strategic Plans, Operational Plans, or publications such as the National Survey of Fishing, Hunting, and Wildlife-Associated Recreation?
6. When possible, does this section contain evidence of public support from user groups, public officials, industry representatives, community leaders, business leaders, and conservation and service organizations?

### **C. Objectives**

What is to be accomplished? Specify fully what is to be accomplished within the time, money and staffing allocated; specify a recognizable end point; ensure it is as quantifiable or verifiable as possible. A clear objective that can be easily understood and not-misunderstood is needed because considerable money, time, and energy would be spent to reach the objective. Objectives are worthy of considerable thought, discussion, and reflection. This section is critical because it defines the destination for the entire project.

1. Does this section clearly and logically follow from the definition of need? Is a clear link evident between the need section and the objectives section?
2. Are the objectives in accord with overall State agency goals, policies, and philosophies for fisheries and wildlife management? Are they in accord with the Wildlife and Sport Fish Restoration Programs?
3. Are the objectives like a good photograph - clear, sharp, and in focus?
4. If accomplished, would the objectives partially or totally satisfy the need, solve the problem, or exploit the opportunity?
5. Are the objectives as specific and measurable as possible?
6. Do the objectives provide a target date for completion?
7. Are the objectives focused on outputs and results to be achieved? How would the annual performance report measure progress toward accomplishment of the objectives?
8. Are the objectives realistic and attainable using the time and resources available?
9. Were the objectives written by or are they agreeable to those directly responsible for their attainment?

## **D. Expected Results or Benefits**

What will be the results or benefits of accomplishing the project? Provide a complete description of all expected benefits. Blow your own horn! Assume that no one would understand or appreciate the benefits of this project unless you tell them. This section is your opportunity to sell the benefits of this project to the reader in a clear, concise, and convincing manner. Selling project benefits in this section is a key step in receiving project funding.

1. Does this section clearly and logically follow from the definition of need and objectives? Is a clear link to the need section and the objectives section evident?
2. Does this section describe benefits to the resource and the various publics that use those resources?
3. Does this section describe economic and social benefits?
4. Does this section describe all expected results and benefits?
5. Does this section describe the magnitude of project benefits in terms of the
  - a. quantity and quality of the resource managed, protected, restored, or improved
  - b. size of public to benefit and
  - c. size of geographical area to benefit?
6. Does this section describe the duration of project benefits?
7. When possible, does this section utilize photos, graphics, quantification, comparisons, and other measures to illustrate the significance or importance of the expected results and benefits?

## **E. Approach**

How will the objectives be accomplished? Describe the actions, activities, methods and procedures that would be used. Provide budgets and schedules. Identify key project personnel and cooperators. Identify project location. A complete, clear, and concise description is needed to ensure efficient and effective project implementation. This section provides the road map that will be used to reach the objectives (destination) for the project.

1. Does this section clearly and logically link to the previous sections? Is the proposed work all necessary for accomplishment of the objectives? Is the proposed work complete or is something missing?
2. Do the actions, activities, methods and procedures describe a logical sequence of events that will lead to attainment of project objectives?
3. Does this Section provide costs, by year, for the project? Are costs realistic?
4. Does this Section address program income or in-kind costs if applicable?
5. Does this Section provide schedules that are realistic?
6. Does this Section identify all the key project personnel and cooperators?
7. Does this Section identify all the project locations?

8. Does this Section describe how project evaluation and monitoring will be accomplished?
9. Are there evaluation criteria and methods that would be used to measure progress toward and attainment of the objectives?
10. Does this Section describe how planning, supervision, and reporting would be accomplished?
11. Does it describe how performance reports would measure progress toward accomplishment of the objectives?
12. Does this Section reference existing manuals, publications, reports or other written material in order to save time and paperwork?
13. Are the types of information and level of detail commensurate with the nature and complexity of the project?

## **F. Compliance**

1. There are Federal compliances and additional regulations that will need to be addressed prior to approval of any award.

For more information:

<http://www.dnr.state.md.us/grantsandloans/waterwayimprovement.asp>



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